(U) Mapping the World's Languages

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Now, you can look on a special map to identify the local language... (C)

(C) You've just intercepted the communications of a new terrorist organization which is plotting to attack Americans. They based in a remote area of Indonesia, and unfortunately they are using a local language you have never heard before. Your first problem is to try to identify the language they are using. How are you supposed to do that, when you don't even know what languages are spoken in that part of the country?

(C) Or, you find that you are responsible for providing language support to a peacekeeping effort in central Africa. It is easy to find out what the national languages of the country are, but what languages do the people in your area of responsibility actually speak?

(C) There are roughly 7,000 languages spoken throughout the world. Until now, determining exactly what languages are spoken in a particular geographic region could be nearly impossible, short of traveling there and surveying the population. But now, a new tool is being developed in R63 that can instantly create a map showing what languages the local people speak anywhere on earth.

(S) Much of the data for this project comes from various non-governmental sources, combined with government data. In addition to showing where nearly 7,000 different languages are spoken, voice samples in thousands of languages are being added to the software version of the map. Analysts will be able to click on any point on the globe, and hear the language(s) spoken there. They will also be able to call up basic information about the people who speak each language - information such as the number of speakers, their primary religious affiliations, language dialects, and so on. And they will be able to see what resources the Intelligence Community has for that language - which (if any) language analysts know that language, which language analysts know a related language, what language tools we have for that language, and so on. Ultimately, a full-featured interactive version of the map will be available on the Agency's internal web.

(C) While the full software version of the map will take several months to complete, hardcopy maps showing the languages of any place on earth can be created right now. Just contact Steve Huffman in R63 (███████ , and he can custom design a map that meets your needs. Or stop by his office in the basement of the R and E building (RBW087) and view the collection of maps he has already created.

(C) Take a look at a [sample language map](#) for the Horn of Africa,

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